

Message Text

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44

ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 USIE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03

INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-15

OMB-01 PPT-02 SCA-01 AID-20 RSR-01 /093 W

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R 171102Z AUG 73

FM AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2629

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY SAIGON

AMCONSUL HONG KONG

C O N F I D E N T I A L PHNOM PENH 8599

PASS USIA

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, CB

SUBJECT: GKR EFFORTS TO LIMIT FOREIGN PRESS CORPS

1. BECAUSE THE AUGUST 15 CESSATION OF U.S. AIR SUPPORT HAS BROUGHT JOURNALISTS INTO PHNOM PENH IN FAR GREATER NUMBER THAN THE KHMER CAN HANDLE AND BECAUSE HIDDEN IN THIS INFLUX HAS BEEN AT LEAST ONE REPORTER HAVING A VERY POOR REPUTATION HERE, THE GKR HAS DECIDED TO IMPOSE NEW CONTROLS ON THE ENTRY OF NEWSMEN. MINISTRY OF INFORMATION OFFICIALS INFORM US THAT THEY HOPE IN PARTICULAR TO BRING THE FOREIGN PRESS CORPS DOWN FROM APPROXIMATELY EIGHTY TO UNDER FIFTY AND TO PREVENT THE ENTRY OF SUCH PERSONS AS LE MONDE'S CLAUDE POMONTI, WHOSE SCATHING MARXIST DESCRIPTION OF CAMBODIAN SOCIETY AROUSED MUCH ANIMOSITY HERE AND WHO MANAGED TO OBTAIN A TOURIST VISA ON HIS ARRIVAL LAST WEEK AT POCHENTONG AIRPORT.

2. GKR EMBASSIES ABROAD ARE BEING INSTRUCTED TO REFUSE ENTRY VISAS TO ALL FREE LANCE JOURNALISTS
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AND PHOTOGRAPHERS AS WELL AS TO NEWSMEN REPRESENTING

MEDIA WHICH HAVE SHOWN CLEAR HOSTILITY TOWARD THE GKR OR WHICH HAVE LITTLE INFLUENCE. PERIODICALS WITH SIGNIFICANT AUDIENCES WILL BE LIMITED TO ONLY ONE REPRESENTATIVE, NEWS AGENCIES AND RADIO NETWORKS WILL BE ALLOWED TWO, AND TELEVISION NETWORKS THREE.

3. WE HAVE QUERIED THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION REGARDING THE STATUS OF NEWSMEN ALREADY IN THE COUNTRY, NOTING THAT TWO AMERICAN JOURNALISTS HAVE COMPLAINED THAT AUTHORITIES HAVE REFUSED TO RENEW THEIR TEMPORARY TOURIST VISAS. ALTHOUGH A CLEAR POLICY ON THIS MATTER HAS NOT YET BEEN ESTABLISHED, WE GATHER THAT JOURNALISTS ENTERING THE COUNTRY ON TOURIST VISAS MAY BE REQUIRED TO LEAVE AND REAPPLY FOR ENTRY EVEN IF THEY NOW MEET THE CRITERIA CITED IN PARA 2. (WE AIDED SOME OF THESE JOURNALISTS TO OBTAIN THEIR CURRENT TEMPORARY PERMISSION TO FILE BY ATTESTING TO THEIR BONA FIDES.)

4. COMMENT: A FEW INCONVENIENCES MAY WELL RESULT FROM WHAT IS, WE BELIEVE, AN UNDERSTANDABLE ATTEMPT TO COPE WITH A PRESS POPULATION EXPLOSION. WE HOPE THE DEPARTMENT WILL HELP US PLACE POSSIBLE COMPLAINTS INTO PROPER PERSPECTIVE.
SWANK

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: n/a
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 17 AUG 1973
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: elyme
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1973PHNOM08599
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS SWANK
Errors: N/A
Film Number: n/a
From: PHNOM PENH
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1973/newtext/t19730831/aaaaawol.tel
Line Count: 86
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE
Office: ACTION EA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: elyme
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 27 AUG 2001
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <27-Aug-2001 by boyleja>; APPROVED <03-Jan-2002 by elyme>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: GKR EFFORTS TO LIMIT FOREIGN PRESS CORPS
TAGS: PFOR, CB
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005